DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 311 433 CS 212 004

AUTHOR Chan, Ming K.; Lau, Tuen-yu
TITLE Dilemma of the Communist Press in a Pluralistic Society: The Case of Hong Kong.
PUB DATE Aug 89
NOTE 39p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (72nd, Washington, DC, August 10-13, 1989).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Case Studies; *Communism; Competition; Foreign Countries; *Mass Media Role; *News Media; Political Influences; Press Opinion; Theories
IDENTIFIERS China; *Hong Kong; Journalism Research; *News Sources

ABSTRACT

Through three real-life examples in and involving Hong Kong during the period from June 1987 to November 1988, this paper analyzes the impact of competition and availability of alternative news sources on the conduct and performance of the communist press in the pluralistic society of British colonial Hong Kong--a media-rich metropolis over which the People's Republic of China (PRC) will resume sovereignty in 1997. The paper provides a case study of the co-existence of the capitalist and socialist press in a "one country, two systems" model not found in the traditional four theories of the press, since the communist press is actively participating in shaping Hong Kong's future. The paper reveals some critical areas of PRC-linked press in Hong Kong in balancing its dual roles as the official mouthpiece of the PRC establishment and as an accurate information transmitter serving the interests of the people of Hong Kong. The paper also illustrates how the communist press journalists, sandwiched between these two masters, attempted to perform their task professionally compared with the local press in Hong Kong. (Sixty-nine footnotes are included.) (RS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED311433

Draft Copy
Do NOT Cite

Dilemma of the Communist Press in a Pluralistic Society: The Case of Hong Kong

By

Ming K. Chan
Department of History
University of Hong Kong
Hong Kong
5-859-2872

and

Tuen-yu Lau
School of Journalism
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI 48824-1212
U.S.A.
517-353-6430

A paper accepted for presentation at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication convention, Washington, D.C., August 10-13, 1989.
Ming K. Chan teaches in the Department of History, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong. Tuen-yu Lau is a doctoral candidate in the School of Journalism, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan 48824-1212.

CS213004

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Tuen-yu Lau
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

Dilemma of the Communist Press in a Pluralistic Society: The Case of Hong Kong

by

Ming K. Chan
University of Hong Kong
and
Tuen-yu Lau
Michigan State University

Abstract

This paper seeks to analyze the impact of competition and avaliability of alternative news sources on the conduct and performance of the communist press in a pluralistic society. The society chosen is Hong Kong--a media rich metropolis which the People's Republic of China will resume sovereignty from the British in 1997. With the active participation of the communist press in shaping Hong Kong's future, the study provides a case study of the co-existence of the capitalist and socialist press in a "One Country, Two Systems" model not found in the traditional four theories of the press.

Through three real-life examples in and involving Hong Kong during the period from June 1987 to November 1988, the study aims at revealing some critical areas of PRC-linked press in Hong Kong in balancing its dual roles as (a) an official mouthpiece of the PRC establishment; and (b) an accurate information transmitter serving the interests of the Hong Kong people. It also illustrates how the communist press journalists, sandwiched between these two masters, attempted to perform their task professionally vis-a-vis the local press in Hong Kong.

Dilemma of the Communist Press in a Pluralistic Society: The Case of Hong Kong

The classical four theories of the press have provided the basic theoretical framework for a macroscopic analysis of press systems in the world.[1] Studies using these theories usually pigeon hole the press system of a nation according to ideological divisions. Few studies, however, have examined the ideological differences of the press within a particular press system.[2] A study of the coexistence and confrontation of ideologically polemic press within a pluralistic society will add a much needed new dimension to our existing academic understanding in this field.[3] Specifically, to examine the conduct and performance of a communist press in an ideologically pluralistic society help probe the relationship between the press and society.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze how the availability of contrasting viewpoints and alternative news sources impact on the conduct and performance of a communist press in a non-communist society. The communist press has to serve dual roles in a competitive free market society. On the one hand, the communist press is to propagate communist ideology and perspectives. Thus, its role is to advance the communist state/party's policy objectives. On the other hand, the availability of alternative news sources and views will contrast with and challenge the editorial policy of the communist press. In some cases, the communist press needs to compete for readers either for financial survival or for effective and extensive transmission of its views. Thus, the practices of other press and the needs of the readers can influence the communist press' conduct and performance. If these two roles were the same, there should not be any problem. However, these two roles can be contradictory, and at times even mutually exclusive. Then, the question is how does the communist press balance these two roles?

Another question is whether the competitive market force is a more important factor than party directives in impacting on the editorial practices and policy of the communist press? These two issues will be raised in this study.

Hong Kong--a Pluralistic Society Under Active Communist Influence

The society chosen in this study is Hong Kong, a media rich Asian metropolis now under British colonial administration.[4] Hong Kong is chosen as the focus here for the following reasons:

First, the most important reason is Hong Kong is a capitalist society with the world's freest economic competition.[5] However, as a territory adjacent to the Chinese mainland over which the People's Republic of China (PRC) will resume sovereignty on July 1, 1997, Hong Kong has always been under the direct and indirect influence of the Chinese communist state. After 1997, Hong Kong will become the world's major real-life experiment testing out the feasibility of a capitalist society under socialist sovereignty. This "One Country, Two Systems" formula boldly created by PRC leaders will make Hong Kong's press system unique in the world that is not found in the four theories of the press.[6]

Second, the transition from the British colonial rule to Chinese sovereignty has added much to the PRC's clout in Hong Kong on top of the already very close human and socio-economic links between Hong Kong and the mainland.[7] As such, PRC policies and official pronouncements have been of increasing importance to Hong Kong. This creates a unique situation in which PRC-linked press in Hong Kong exerts much greater influence and more active socio-political participation than any other PRC-linked press could enjoy in other settings.

Third, during the course of the 1982-1984 Sino-British negotiations on the future of Hong Kong, both the Chinese and British governments resorted to playing the "public opinions card" in Hong Kong with the press being an indispensable and

powerful instrument in this prolonged tug-of-war to win support of the Hong Kong people.[8] Since then, the press in Hong Kong has been at the forefront both as the mirror reflection of and a major manifestation forum for the rising tide of collective civic consciousness and rapid, even at times, radical politicalization of the local population.

Fourth, in the still on-going and at times bitterly controversial process of drafting the Basic Law for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region which will be promulgated in 1990 and effective from July 1, 1997 until June 30, 2047, the local press in both news reportage and in opinion columns is again playing a crucial frontline function in the extensive and elaborate exercise of "public consultation" mounted by the Basic Law Drafting Committee/Consultative Committee of the PRC.

In realpolitik, the PRC-linked local press, together with media outputs from the mainland, form a powerful policy instrument and propaganda weapon in Beijing's current efforts to shape the blueprint and chart the course of Hong Kong's development before and after 1997. So, the active participation of the PRC-linked communist press in Hong Kong's capitalist society and the media's important role in setting the agenda for the territory's future make it both an appropriate and significant case to examine the two major issues raised in this study.[9]

The Communist Press in Hong Kong

What makes Hong Kong's situation intriguing is the highly visible local presence and keenly-felt influence of the People's Republic of China. The 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration On Hong Kong's future stipulated that Hong Kong will be returned to China in 1997.[10] The Chinese Communist Party has been a major player in Hong Kong affairs since it took over the mainland in 1949. The fact that in recent years the British appointed governor of Hong Kong needs to have Chinese consent in major

decision makings is openly known.[11] And this becomes increasingly obvious as the shadow of 1997 looms closer.

As a pluralistic society enjoying one of the greatest freedom of speech in Asia, Hong Kong witnesses the coexistence of diversified viewpoints representing the official views of the Chinese Communist Party, the Guomindang (the Nationalist Party) on Taiwan, as well as the British and Hong Kong governments.[12] Five of the 44 Chinese-language dailies are considered pro-PRC and one is pro-Taiwan.[13] Even though the Hong Kong government does not have its own official newspaper in Hong Kong, the leading English-language newspaper is considered pro-establishment and often inclines quite favorably toward the Hong Kong government.[14] The Chinese and British governments have worked through the local media in mutual confrontation over major issues.[15] In addition, many PRC and Taiwan domestic newspapers are airmailed to Hong Kong daily and openly sold at local newsstands.[16] Pro-PRC and pro-Taiwan newspapers have also used Hong Kong as a battleground to challenge each other and propagate the unification of China.[17]

The political links and command hierarchy of the major PRC press-actors in Hong Kong are: The New China News Agency (NCNA or Xinhua) Hong Kong Branch; three PRC-linked dailies--Ta Kung Pao, Hsin Wan Pao[18] and Wen Wei Po; and the Overseas Edition of the Outlook Weekly (Liao Wang), an organ of the PRC/CCP central authorities in external propaganda. A sketch of these actors will help understand the analysis in this study.

The NCNA Hong Kong Branch is more than a simple professional news agency since 1950, even though its multitude of internal units include a genuine "news department" befitting any news agency.[19] The principal task of the NCNA is to perform "liaison functions" between the PRC authorities and the colonial regime in the absence of formal Chinese consular representation in Hong Kong because of stern British objections.[20] In a clear and obvious case of journalism and politics mix in Hong Kong, NCNA is

a news agency openly fronts as the PRC's political-consular presence. In recent years, with the settlement of Hong Kong's future status, NCNA has become an aggressive and high-profile player in Hong Kong politics. Many Hong Kong observers believe that the local structure of NCNA has reflected a PRC contingency plan for Hong Kong administration in case the British decided to pull out before 1997, then this "shadow government" could immediately fill-in.[21]

The three major PRC-linked newspapers in Hong Kong can in reality be regarded as two papers because Ta Kung Pao and Hsin Wan Pao used to be owned and operated by the same prominent leftist figure in Hong Kong, Fei Yimin.[22] Until his death in May, 1988, Fei was holding such high offices in the PRC hierarchy as deputy chairman of the Basic Law Drafting Committee, and vice-chairman of the All China Journalist Association headquartered in Beijing.[23] Following Fei's death, Yang Qi, a deputy director of the NCNA Hong Kong Branch was appointed Fei's successor at the helm of Ta Kung Pao, a clear indicator of the newspaper's importance on the PRC news propaganda front in Hong Kong.

The other daily in the PRC camp, Wen Wei Po, also maintains interlocking political leadership ties with the NCNA. Its long-time director, Lee Tze Chung, is a member of the standing committee of the National Committee of the National People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), the paramount united front forum in Beijing. Lee, who previously worked with Wen Wei Po in Shanghai, joined the daily as chief editor in 1950. Its current deputy director, Chen Bojin, was a former deputy director of the local NCNA in charge of the news department.

In comparison with Wen Wei Po, Ta Kung Pao during the last few years seems to be the more authoritative PRC press organs among the two with closer links to the Beijing leadership and policy line.[24] This factor may be a decisive reason behind the increasingly obvious differences in the general tone, style and editorial orientation of these two dailies. In recent months,

the open rivalry and sharp competitions between the two PRC-linked dailies have made local headlines.

The Communist Press' Interaction With the Hong Kong Government and Other Local Press

The communist press co-existed peacefully with the Hong Kong government with little interference or harassment. There were only two unhappy incidents; one in 1952 and the other in 1967. First, in 1952, the publisher of Ta Kung Pao, Fei Yimin, and its editor, Lee Tsung Ying, were sued by the Crown for publishing a seditious item in violation of section 4.1c of the Sedition Ordinance.[25] At that time, Ta Kung Pao carried a commentary of the People's Daily about a Guangdong delegation which was denied entry into Hong Kong for the purpose of visiting the victims of a housing estate fire.[26] Ta Kung Pao was found guilty according to the Control of Publications Consolidation, and was ordered to suspend publication for six months, and both Fei and Lee were fined. The PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs accused the British government of "violating the basic freedom and rights of the Chinese people in Hong Kong."[27] Finally, Ta Kung Pao, which was actually suspended for only 11 days, was allowed by the Supreme Court to resume publication, and the charges against two other pro-communist papers were also dropped.[28]

The second confrontation between the Chinese and the British government was during the 1967 riots connected with political developments in China. As the Cultural Revolution picked up its momentum in China, leftist elements in Hong Kong tried to stir up civil disturbances against the British colonial regime. The pro-communist press then carried many severe criticisms of the British in Hong Kong. As a crackdown of the communists in Hong Kong, three pro-communist newspapers were ordered to suspend publication and several pro-communist newspaper publishers and journalists were jailed.[29]

Other than these two incidents, Sino-British relationship has generally been cordial. In fact, some recent developments since the 1984 Sino-British agreement on Hong Kong's future suggest that the British will try to avoid any undertakings that would cause embarrassment to the Chinese authorities. A recent case in point was a controversy over the film censorship policy in Hong Kong. The Asian Wall Street Journal reported on March 17, 1987 that over the past 13 years, Hong Kong banned 20 films that might be prejudicial to good relations with China after consultation with the governor's political adviser, even though the Hong Kong government lacked any valid legal authority for such censorship.[30] Then in July, 1987, the Hong Kong Legislative Council passed the Film Censorship Bill of 1987, which would ban films that are "seriously prejudicial to good relations with territories outside Hong Kong."[31]

The communist press' interactions with other local media mostly took the form of competition. In terms of readership, the Hong Kong communist press' overall circulation is rather limited. As a media voice, the communist press carries an important role that is far bigger than its actual readership size. Wen Wei Po had a total readership of 52,000 at the end of 1987, with an estimated daily circulation of 35,000 to 40,000 copies.[32] As for Ta Kung Pao, its daily circulation figure was not even covered in the market survey because it accounted for less than one percent of the Hong Kong newspaper readership total. Even though Ta Kung Pao claims a daily circulation of 50,000 copies, many local journalists and advertising professionals offer an estimate of between 10,000 to 20,000 copies. This circulation is insignificant compared with the largest circulated newspaper that has a daily readership of more than 1.5 million among the 5.6 million people in Hong Kong.[33]

Despite its limited reach, the communist press enjoys a significant position in providing PRC perspectives and reflecting official Chinese stands. Sometimes, PRC writers use pen names to

express PRC positions in other non-PRC papers.[34] This is particularly important in the on-going debate over the drafting of the Basic Law that shapes the future constitutional framework of Hong Kong.

On the other hand, the other media provide alternative news sources challenging the PRC viewpoints. All the media in Hong Kong, including pro-PRC press, need to strike a delicate balance between Hong Kong/British realities and Chinese politics.[35] There have been indications that the non-communist press is less critical of the Beijing government than toward the Hong Kong government.[36] Also, cases of self-censorship were openly admitted by the Hong Kong Journalists Association.[37]

It is against this setting and interaction between press of different ideological stands that this paper seeks to analyze the impact of competition and alternative news sources on the communist press in a pluralistic society.

Cases Used in the Analysis

This study will use a case method approach. This method allows an analysis of the phenomena based on the manifest content in and happenings about the media, which is the focus of this study. Particularly, the different players' active participation in drafting the Basic Law signals the growing importance of the press. Through three real-life examples in and involving Hong Kong during June 1987 to November 1988,[38] the study aims at revealing some critical areas of the PRC-linked local press and their interactions with PRC officialdom and mainland press organs. The three cases are:

1. The Li Hou--Outlook Weekly Incident, June, 1987;
2. The Outlook Weekly Anti-American Article Episode, November, 1988;
3. The Beidaihe Affair, July-September, 1988.

These three cases were chosen because they concretely address the following issues:

First, the extent to which PRC mainland press outputs aimed at Hong Kong should be regarded as an accurate and authoritative transmitter of Beijing's official line on Hong Kong in this volatile transition period leading to the 1997 resumption of Chinese sovereignty over the territory.

Second, the public perception and actual state of competition among the PRC-linked press in Hong Kong and the resultant impact on news quality and readership response.

Third, the conflicts and dilemma caused by the gap between the credibility and integrity requirements of Hong Kong journalism and mainland Chinese officialdom's bureaucratic manipulation of, and double talk in/with the press.

Fourth, the possibilities that such conflicts and competitions offer clear reflections or valid indications of policy discord and factional strife within both the PRC leadership in Beijing and the PRC-linked press organs in Hong Kong.

Fifth, the effectiveness of the PRC-linked press in Hong Kong in discharging its added united front functions at an unofficial level to influence public opinions and gain popular support in a community which enjoys a flourishing free press with a large number of local and international press organs reflecting various views, and is beyond Beijing's actual jurisdiction.

In short, these cases illustrate how the PRC-linked press serve its two masters: the state/party establishment in remote control and the readers in Hong Kong. It also shows how the PRC-linked press journalists in Hong Kong, sandwiched between the two masters, try to carry out their professional tasks.

These are large issues to which definitive verdicts cannot be reached easily and quickly. At best, this paper is only an exploratory study which seeks to add a new dimension to the four theories of the press by studying the unprecedented "One Country, Two Systems" experiment launched by the PRC leadership in resuming sovereignty over Hong Kong.

Case One: The Li Hou-Outlook Weekly Incident, June, 1987

This case study will show, among other things, the unintended but real damage done by the PRC officialdom to the professional integrity and public credibility of its own press in Hong Kong. In a double victimization situation, the PRC-linked press organs not only became the "scapegoat" for PRC official blunders, but also suffered a tarnished image and diminished united front effectiveness due to such blunders.

This case is selected precisely because it focuses on the PRC's most crucial policy objective toward Hong Kong--preserving the territory's "stability and prosperity" status quo while gaining popular support for the forthcoming Basic Law. It also reveals the double-edged sword nature of the press in an open, pluralistic society that sometimes extracts a heavy penalty from its manipulations of totalitarian background.

The case centered around the political reforms in Hong Kong, particularly with the introduction of direct election of the Legislative Council (Legco), the highest local law-making body. In 1984, before the Sino-British agreement on Hong Kong's future was concluded, the Hong Kong government published a White Paper on The Future Development of Representative Government in Hong Kong which started the train on constitutional reform with direct elections introduced in 1985.[39] In May 27, 1987, the Hong Kong government published a Green Paper entitled The 1987 Review of Developments in Representative Government for public consultation. In contrast to the 1984 White Paper, this Green Paper did not advocate any specific political or electoral reform. Instead, it invited public comment on a number of options. Direct election of some members to the Legco in 1988 was listed as an option.

The PRC authorities lost no time to express its opposition to direct election and to castigate the British attempt to develop a representative government in Hong Kong before 1997 as a violation of the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration.

The first major PRC offensive took the form of an orchestrated press releases from Beijing which would be echoed by pro-PRC elements in Hong Kong. On June 18, 1987, the news department of NCNA Hong Kong Branch distributed an advanced summary of an interview with Li Hou, forthcoming in the June 22, 1987 Outlook Weekly's Overseas Edition No. 45 issue. Li Hou, deputy director of the PRC State Council's Hong Kong-Macau Affairs Office and secretary-general of the Basic Law Drafting Committee (BLDC), was quoted in this interview as claiming that direct election in 1988 Hong Kong would fail to "converge" with the Basic Law being drafted by China for promulgation in 1990, and was contrary to the "spirit" of the Sino-British Joint Declaration. Li further said that direct elections would only sharpen the contradictions among the different classes and segments in Hong Kong, leading to political, economic and social instability that is harmful to a smooth transfer of sovereignty in 1997.[40]

Li's statement, widely reported in the local press (both the PRC-linked dailies and newspapers of other political persuasions), created an immediate and powerful shock in Hong Kong. The public criticisms of Li focused on two major issues: (1) the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration stipulated that the British shall be responsible for Hong Kong's administration until 1997; and (2) it also promised that the post-1997 Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) legislature should be constituted by elections. To counter these barrages of strong public criticisms, pro-PRC public figures issued statements in support of Li Hou's view.[41] Leftist organizations also were mobilized in the counterattack. These leftist echoes to Li's statement were, of course, prominently reported in Ta Kung Pao and Wen Wei Po.[42] Although Li Hou's direct statement challenged the Hong Kong government's right to run the territory until 1997, the colonial authorities publicly reacted in a firm but restrained, low-profile manner.

Meantime, an even stronger criticism of the Hong Kong government's electoral reform was made by an "anonymous" senior Chinese official in an off-the-record talk with Hong Kong journalists in Shenzhen, PRC's special economic zone bordering Hong Kong. This senior official was widely identified in Hong Kong media none other than Xu Jiatun, director of the local NCNA. Xu's off-the-record remark was that the promise of an elected legislature in the Joint Declaration had been Beijing's concession for the sake of maintaining good relations with London.[43] However, when TVB, Hong Kong's leading television station, referred to this remark in its evening news on June 21, the local NCNA spokesman issued an immediate rebuttal, labelling the TVB news report as "inaccurate."[44]

This NCNA denial was soon followed by a surprising about face retraction from Beijing. On June 23, 1987, the China News Service[45] issued a press release from Beijing, carrying Li Hou's latest "clarification." In his June 23 statement, Li explained that in his interview with the reporter from Outlook Weekly, which took place at a BLDC meeting in Guangzhou, he did express his concern over Hong Kong's proposed direct election in 1988 might pose a problem of convergence with the Basic Law, but Li insisted that he never said "this does not conform to the spirit of the Sino-British Joint Declaration."[46] The reporter who wrote the article, Tan Hua, was blamed for misquoting Li.

From a journalistic perspective, the Li Hou--Outlook Weekly incident raises the following issues:

First, the NCNA Hong Kong Branch's denial could be justified on the technical and ethical grounds that Xu's remark was supposedly "off-the-record" and TVB news report violated this professional confidentiality.[47] On this 1987 occasion, Xu's quick retreat from his undiplomatic "war of words" was through the "professional error" pretext of the Hong Kong media. This gesture was followed in less than 48 hours by Li Hou in Beijing who used a similar escape route.

Second, Li's retraction of June 23 was dispatched by China News Service (CNS), not by NCNA, which had previously released the advanced copy of Li's original statement on June 18. CNS, though also under the control of the CCP Central Committee's Propaganda Department, is supposedly an unofficial news agency with a slightly less orthodoxical and prestigious status than the more authoritative official organ NCNA. This choice of CNS may be a deliberate move to save NCNA from any acute embarrassment over this public about face. Perhaps, PRC authorities were keenly conscious of the need to maintain both the professional credibility of the news function of NCNA and the authority of the NCNA Hong Kong Branch as the PRC's official spokesman.

Third, even though Li placed the entire blame for this "misquotation" on the reporter, Tan Hua, who wrote the original interview piece, such post-facto explanation and reallocation of responsibility was unconvincing to the Hong Kong public at large. Anyone familiar with PRC journalist practices is only too aware of the rather tight party/state editorial control and political supervision of major press organs, including the Outlook Weekly.[48] Also, it is a standard practice that the interviewee demands the right of final review of the story before it can be printed. Against such established patterns of editorial scrutiny, it would seem inconceivable and highly unusual that on this occasion, Li did not exercise his prerogative of final review and even permitted this alleged "misquotation" on such a sensitive issue to circulate unchecked for almost a week.

Fourth, in his retraction, Li explained the circumstances of his original interview in Guangzhou as "talking with Hong Kong journalists" about his views on direct election for 1988. Indirectly, Li tried to shift the blame for this undiplomatic verbal blunder not simply on the professional incompetence of the reporter who did the interview, but more specifically on a "Hong Kong" reporter, thus, trying to reduce the damage done to the reputation of the PRC press organs.

However, Tan Hua, the journalistic "scapegoat" who wrote the original interview, is a PRC journalist and citizen sent from Beijing to station in Hong Kong as Outlook Weekly's local correspondent. It was in this capacity as a member of the "Hong Kong journalists" that Tan went to Guangzhou to cover the BLDC meeting, where he conducted the controversial interview with Li. After Li issued his retraction in Beijing, Tan maintained a very low profile, issued no clarification of his own and refused all attempts to interview him.

Case Two: The Outlook Weekly Anti-American Article Episode, November, 1988

This case will illustrate the problems of the effectiveness and utility of PRC-linked press organ as credible, accurate and authoritative forum for and transmitter of PRC official views for an external audience. It also demonstrate the awkward situation of PRC-linked press in trying to follow closely party propaganda line.

The case is selected for two major reasons. As the Hong Kong-PRC current relationship is both a domestic Chinese matter and also an international issue, the way the PRC press handled reactions with another foreign state in the mainland-Taiwan context has direct parallel effects on Hong Kong. This case also reveals the limited effectiveness of editorial supervision and clumsy post-publication control by the PRC/CCP state-party authorities over their press organs in an external situation.

The public image and professional reputation of Outlook Weekly's Overseas Edition took a second nose-dive in late 1988 over the official "withdraval" of an already published article critical of U.S. policy toward China. One of the spinoff effects of this withdraval was an intensification of the open rivalry between the PRC's local press organs, Ta Kung Pao, and Wen Wei Po.

In contrast to the Li Hou incident, this episode was relatively straight forward. The November 7, 1988, No. 45 issue of Outlook Weekly's Overseas Edition published in its featured "Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau Special Column" an article entitled, "U.S.-Taiwan Relations and Peaceful Reunification of Two Shores of the Straits."[49] The author of the article, Zhang Jingxu, was listed as an associate research fellow of the Institute of Taiwan Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Science. In this article, Zhang strongly criticized U.S. government for the gap between its pronounced official policy of non-interference in the mainland-Taiwan reunification. The timing of its publication, November 7, 1988, on the eve of the U.S. presidential election, was no coincidence. Observers of the PRC's diplomatic front interpreted this as a clear and unmistakable warning to the incoming U.S. administration.

Two days before its actual publication of the Outlook Weekly, the NCNA in Beijing released an advanced copy of this article on November 5, and the next day, Wen Wei Po and Ta Kung Pao in Hong Kong published its advanced copy of Zhang's article. However, two days later, on November 8, Wen Wei Po printed in a small bracket on page two a terse, one sentence wire dispatch from the NCNA in Beijing dated November 7, stating that it had learned that the signed article, "U.S.-Taiwan Relations," had already been withdrawn by the editorial department of Outlook Weekly.[50]

It is interesting to note that on November 8, Ta Kung Pao, also on page two, published an identical version of this one sentence dispatch from the NCNA in Beijing. Yet, there were marked differences in the treatment of this item by the two PRC-linked dailies. Ta Kung Pao not only devoted almost twice as much space to the dispatch as Wen Wei Po, the extra space being taken up by a headline in fairly large block characters, it also attached an editor's note at the end. In this note, Ta Kung Pao stated explicitly that "this daily did not publish the original

release on the said article."[51] This treatment is a veiled hint at the fact that Wen Wei Po did publish the now-withdrawn article, thus, showing poor political judgment on such a major international item and highly sensitive domestic issue. However, neither papers gave any reason for the article's withdrawal.

From a journalistic perspective, this episode raises the following issues:

First, being the mouthpiece of the party/state, how much editorial freedom would the press have in its choice of news. The official thinking is the press should publish whatever the party deems necessary. Moreover, all media should carry the same viewpoint and content so that a unified message is propagated. But, should the PRC-linked press in Hong Kong, as the peripheral press under the control of the central authorities, published whatever is dished out? In this case, the editor of Ta Kung Pao exercised its own judgment and avoided a potential embarrassment.

Second, the episode reaffirmed the fact that the PRC media represent the party's own political stand. So, the almost immediate retraction of Zhang's article was necessary in order to distance the PRC leadership from this potentially counterproductive piece. However, if the press were not the official mouthpiece of the party/state, then the retraction was not necessary because the article only represented Zhang's personal views. This will be a dilemma that will continue to trouble journalists in Beijing and the PRC-linked press in Hong Kong. It is a more complex question for the PRC-linked press in Hong Kong because it will continue to face the challenges from alternative news sources and divergent viewpoints in Hong Kong.

Third, in this unusual press maneuvering for the sake of high-level realpolitik, there were more than two victims (Zhang as the author and Outlook Weekly as a forum) in this international political fallout. The professional reputation and central-level policy alertness of the NCNA network in Beijing was another major casualty. More significant for Hong Kong, the open

rivalry between Ta Kung Pao and Wen Wei Po over this relatively minor episode, appearing only three months after the much more serious dispute on the Beidaihe Affair (to be discussed in case three), did raise a few eyebrows. Many wondered about the actual state of internal competition among the local PRC-linked dailies and the effective extent of their editorial "openness" regarding policy developments on the mainland.

Case Three: The Beidaihe Affair, July-September, 1988[52]

This case demonstrates the inevitable but not necessarily unhealthy conflicts between the PRC-linked local press' pursuit for factual accuracy and editorial autonomy on the one hand, and, the PRC officialdom's insistence on political/policy alertness and public image consciousness in newswork on the other. These kinds of conflicting claims also accentuate the already stiff internal competition among local leftist press because of different modes of journalistic operation in an open and pluralistic community.

This case is selected as it pitted two PRC local press organs against each other and it also revealed the top PRC leadership's reaction to the "misdeeds" of their own press organs in an external context. Further, this case is in the same sense a "by-product" of the journalism reform on the mainland with greater flexibility in editorial approach to news items.

In terms of its political impact, the sharply contradicting reporting between Ta Kung Pao and Wen Wei Po on the interruption/non-interruption of the CCP top leadership's meetings at Beidaihe in July and August, 1988 was much more revealing about the problems in the PRC-linked press than the two incidents involving Outlook Weekly.

A major concern of the PRC leadership since the Spring of 1988 had been the pace and effects of economic reform, especially the need for price reforms.[53] On this issue, opinions within the leadership were divided; with CCP General-Secretary Zhao

Ziyang and Premier Li Peng on opposite sides. On July 27, 1988, a NCNA dispatch from Beidaihe reported that there was a gathering of top leaders at this seaside resort. This was published in Ta Kung Pao.[54]

On August 1, in a front page headline story, Wen Wei Po published its Beijing correspondent's report that a central work conference of the CCP leaders at Beidaihe had ended on July 28 with lively discussion of price and wage problems. There were no policy decisions on price reform, the report said.[55]

Three days later, Ta Kung Pao published a report based on the world news broadcast by a BBC Beijing correspondent in which Poliburo Standing Committee member Qiao Shi was quoted in an interview with the Daily Telegraph as saying that the Beidaihe meeting was not over. He also labelled as "totally ridiculous" a recent report by some Hong Kong newspapers that the meeting was terminated without reaching any agreement.[56] This was the first salvo form Ta Kung Pao on the accuracy and credibility of Wen Wei Po's "scoop" on a major PRC policy development at the highest level. It is interesting to note that this PRC-linked paper had resorted to Western news broadcast transmitting a Western newspaper's interview with a Chinese leader to support its dispute against another PRC-linked local daily.

The next day, August 5, Wen Wei Po returned fire by publishing a wire dispatch from its Beijing correspondent dated August 4, giving a detailed account of the Beidaihe meetings. It said that Deng Xiaoping finally agreed to leave the price reform issues open for the moment. The report added that after the meeting, Zhao Ziyang left Beidaihe to visit Kirin and Mukden before returning to Beijing on July 28. This Wen Wei Po report then raised the controversial point--should these meetings be regarded as a central work conference? If it was not a conference, then there would be of course no "interruption" or "break-off" due to disagreements over price reform. Nonetheless, the report insisted on the factual accuracy of the information

about the CCP leadership's non-decision on price reform after several meetings at Beidaihe.[57]

To buttress its original claim, Ta Kung Pao published on August 9 a dispatch from Beijing, reporting Poliburo Standing Committee member Hu Qili's August 8 meeting with some American-Chinese in which Hu explicitly denied any leadership disagreements in the Beidaihe meetings, which he said would continue to be held.[58] By then, Ta Kung Pao had fortified its claim to authoritativeness in its "news war" with Wen Wei Po over whether there was indeed interruption of the meeting with these external interviews with two poliburo members. But Wen Wei Po did not yield easily. On August 13, it published a dispatch from Beijing, stating the "resumption" of the Beidaihe conference on August 15 for further discussion on price reform.[59] This implied there was in fact an earlier stoppage of the meetings.

A surprise turn of events occurred on August 14, when both Ta Kung Pao and Wen Wei Po simultaneously published on their respective front pages a special dispatch from Beijing dated August 13. In the dispatch, an "authoritative figure" from Beijing denied reports that top Chinese leaders were holding a central work conference at Beidaihe. This authoritative figure further refuted as without "the slightest factual basis" the rumors about a Beidaihe work conference, and labelled its purported breakoff due to serious differences of opinions over reform strategy as even more "pure fiction." According to local analysts, this authoritative figure was none other than Zhao Ziyang himself.[60] In the CCP hierarchy, Zhao Ziyang outranked both Qiao and Hu, and is definitely more authoritative than any other Chinese leaders beside Deng Xiaoping.

The Beidaihe affair did not end with Zhao's refutation of "Hong Kong press rumors." During August 15-17, formal Poliburo meetings were held in Beidaihe in which an outline for economic reforms was approved in principle. This was openly reported in the press. But top Chinese leaders still felt it necessary to

have the final word on the subject and lay to rest press speculations on personality clashes and policy splits within the Poliburo. The People's Daily, the PRC's official mouthpiece, headlined in its September 17, front page (in both domestic and overseas edition) Deng's very strong criticism of the Hong Kong press. This news item, a NCNA Beijing dispatch on September 16, reported that in a meeting with senior Japanese politicians, Deng said the "speculation by some people in Hong Kong about the lack of unity among the CCP top leadership was rumor and fabrication. Some people always wish to see China in turmoil, but we will disappoint them."[61]

This very blunt lashing out at "some people in Hong Kong" put an official end to the Beidaihe affair. It was by far the strongest public, though slightly veiled, attack by PRC top leaders against their own press organs in Hong Kong. What went wrong with the PRC-linked press in Hong Kong that incurred the wrath of the paramount leader? Or were they criticized for performing their professional task too well in reporting what they thought to be actual political developments of profound significance? From a journalistic perspective, the following points deserve some attention:

First, despite their very different ways in covering the Beidaihe meetings, Ta Kung Pao and Wen Wei Po did not really fail in fulfilling their journalistic task. Both papers did report the actual occurrence of meeting involving top Chinese leaders. Their major points of conflict were both technical and interpretative: (a) whether these meetings should be regarded as formal meetings constituting an official central work conference? and (b) whether there was an "interruption" or "break off" of these meetings due to policy disagreements among top leaders? These are legitimate questions for journalists to pursue. Further, their differences are acceptable and not unusual in an open society with a free and pluralistic press presenting a multitude of views.

Second, as Hong Kong maintains very close and substantial economic ties with the mainland, the PRC economic reform measures, especially on prices and wages, will have direct bearings on the Hong Kong economy.[62] As such, the factional alignment and policy change within the PRC top leadership not only will affect the stability and development on the Chinese mainland, but also influence Hong Kong. Thus, it is useful, necessary and desirable for the local press to have the most up-to-date, detailed and accurate coverage of major policy developments in China. With 1997 coming closer every day, the fate of Hong Kong is increasing tied to the future of China. In this sense, the PRC-linked local dailies, with their supposedly better official contacts on the mainland, ought to be at the forefront of Hong Kong's professional journalists in covering China. Thus, their coverage of the Beidaihe meetings is well within the normal work patterns and acceptable range of local journalistic practice. Their readers in Hong Kong, of course, have the right to know the real facts about significant happenings in China.

Third, from an internal perspective, the contrasting and conflicting approaches in Ta Kung Pao and Wen Wei Po's reportage of the Beidaihe affair are partly due to differences in the personal background, professional outlook and operational style of their respective correspondent teams stationed in Beijing. Ta Kung Pao's team is composed of middle age native mainlanders (PRC citizens) who are highly skillful and experienced journalists. As veterans of the Cultural Revolution and other post-Mao political campaigns, they are thoroughly "politicized." As such, they tend to be relatively more orthodox in outlook, more keenly aware of official policy intents, and more polished in their approach toward the party/state establishment. Wen Wei Po's Beijing team is staffed by younger journalists dispatched from Hong Kong. They are Hong Kong-educated, more energetic and aggressive in their mode of operation, more cosmopolitan and

pluralistic in outlook, and less sensitive to PRC official pressure. Thus, consciously or otherwise, on the Beidaihe affair, Wen Wei Po's Beijing dispatches showed little hesitation in reporting or even stressing policy disagreements within top leadership, making no concessions to the official establishment's desire to preserve at least a facade of high-level unity on sensitive policy decisions.[63] Ta Kung Pao, on the other hand, relied more extensively on establishment sources and resorted to direct quotation from senior officials to buttress its claims to authoritativeness and factual accuracy, hence, serving well its expected functions as the vehicle for the official voices.

Fourth, the CCP leadership's criticism of the Hong Kong press' handling of the Beidaihe affair is a direct reflection of official displeasure and discomfort with the apparently (if only a partial and short-lived) high degree of autonomy in their news coverage. In particular, the Chinese officialdom was probably alarmed and disturbed by the following aspects: (a) Ta Kung Pao and Wen Wei Po's reports of the Beidaihe meetings and the top leadership's inability to reach a policy consensus might mean unwelcome and pre-mature public knowledge of still divided official views on serious problems in economic reform. (b) These Hong Kong dailies' reportage of "top-level" meetings without conclusions "might be regarded as unwanted and undesirable external intrusion that could adversely affect a still on-going decision making process on a highly sensitive issue. (c) Wen Wei Po's repeated relevations of "interruptions" or "breakoff" did not square with the PRC's official projected image of internal unity at top leadership level.

The relatively long delay (two weeks) in mounting an "authoritative" rebuttal to these Hong Kong press' accounts also may mean that the real problem did not stem from their factual accuracy (or lack of accuracy) but with the possible public impression and political tension such press reports might generate. The PRC top leaders, particularly those at the helm of

the crisis management team, attempted to salvage the troubled economic reforms by faulting the Hong Kong press for its lack of political sensitivity and respect for authority in exposing the unofficial versions of the true situation. However, this was provoked only after the publication of these damaging press "rumors" on Beidaihe meetings mean they are entering a new stage of state/party relations with the press in the era of supposedly "openness" of journalism reform. In earlier days, pre-publication censorship was the norm.

Fifth, the post-publication criticisms form both Zhao and Deng also reveal the limited effectiveness and capacity of the PRC officialdom in imposing prior editorial control or exercising rigid political censorship on "external" press in this post-Mao period of "Four Modernizations."[64] In recent years, the presence of a sizable and active contingent of external (form Hong Kong, Taiwan as well as from foreign countries and international press organs) correspondents in China also, means the end of party-state establishment's near monopoly on news sources, communication channels and editorial direction.[65] The fact that both Ta Kung Pao and Wen Wei Po are PRC-linked dailies supposedly coming under the purview and guidance of the Hong Kong-Macau Work Committee of the CCP Central Committee/PRC State Council probably added much to Zhao and Deng's indignation and frustration. In this sense, these two senior leaders' public rebuttals can perhaps be regarded more as an attempt to present their desired official version of the Beidaihe meeting to set the official record straight rather than as a belated and ineffective attempt at reasserting control over external press organs. One may argue that unless the PRC leaders can successfully put their economic house in order, they will enjoy even less success in combating external press "leaks" on economic crises and policy dilemmas.

Sixth, to many Hong Kong newspaper readers, the Beidaihe affair was more than simply a case of heated professional rivalry between the Ta Kung Pao and Wen Wei Po; experienced newspaper

readers have already begun to understand that the PRC local press front is no longer a single rigid, monolithic block. But of even greater significance is the development, as seen in this affair, of a new kind of three-way relationship between the PRC-linked local press, the PRC establishment on the mainland, and the requirement of the highly competitive, pluralistic and free press market in Hong Kong. If the PRC press front in Hong Kong were to serve its united front functions effectively in this transition era, an organic and extensive fine-tuning toward the professional requirements and readership demands in this press market would be necessary.

Concluding Observations

The three cases illustrate the dual roles the PRC-linked press in Hong Kong has to juggle with. The directives of the party/state and the needs to compete professionally in a free and pluralistic market are the two forces that have impacted on the conduct and performance of the communist press. In a manner of speaking, the PRC-linked journalists are "torn between two masters"--the party leaders and the readers.

The interactions of these actors--the press/journalists, the PRC state/party establishment and the readers in Hong Kong--makes it a unique press model that is not found in the traditional four theories of the press. It is because the active participation of the PRC-linked press and its clout in influencing public opinion and policy in Hong Kong is not found in other settings. The PRC-linked local press in Hong Kong forms, by design and necessity, a key and high-profile component in the local united front set up with primary responsibility for information transmission and propaganda dissemination. These are not simple or easy tasks, given the relatively position of the PRC-linked press organs in the overall context of the Hong Kong press.

During the past 40 years (since the PRC establishment in 1949), Hong Kong has enjoyed a flourishing free press with a high

readership. At present, this pluralistic, colorful local press community consists of 68 newspapers and 549 periodicals, including 44 Chinese-language dailies and two English-language dailies in a city with 5.6 million people. The larger Chinese newspapers include overseas Chinese communities in their distribution network and some also have editions printed abroad in the United States, Canada, Australia and Britain. It is also the East and Southeast Asia hub and a China-reporting haven for many foreign newspapers, magazines, international news agencies and electronic media. Several leading international news magazines have editions printed in Hong Kong, which is also the home base for two major regional news magazines and two American international newspapers' Asian editions. The Hong Kong press scene is truly cosmopolitan and diversified and far-reaching.

It is on such a modern, complex and fully internationalized press scene that PRC press inputs both from the PRC-linked local organs and directly from the Chinese mainland must try to find their mark and create their desired impact. In so doing, the PRC-linked press must compete on two fronts: (1) with the press of other ideological stands; and (2) with other PRC-linked press.

In a sense, the internal competition and open rivalry between the two PRC-linked dailies delineated in cases two and three have another local and genuinely united front ("us and them") dimensions besides the obvious and crucial PRC central party/state and Hong Kong local organ relationship. It is very important that the Ta Kung Po versus Wen Wei Po interactions should also be viewed from the often-ignored perspective of their external and at time hostile competitions with the other Hong Kong newspapers which represent collectively and individually the alternative sources for, and reliable communication channels about news and views on Hong Kong, China and the world beyond. It is against this local non-PRC press-peers' popularity, credibility, authoritativeness, and above all, representativeness in both news and views functions that they exercise their united

front political muscles. It is extremely difficult, if not entirely impossible, to attempt any accurate, fair and objective assessment of the record of performance of Ta Kung Pao and Wen Wei Po in fulfilling these two major tasks which are sometimes indistinguishable even to their own news workers.

However, if Ta Kung Pao, Wen Wei Po and other PRC-linked press organs in Hong Kong want to be an effective and credible transmitter of PRC views in Hong Kong, they need to consider their acceptance among the readers and competition with other alternative news views. So far, leftist organs and press outputs have been regarded with utmost suspicion and disgust by Hong Kong public. Statistics also showed that their readership has been dropping.[66] Perhaps the PRC/CCP leadership in Hong Kong and Beijing should realize that their constant, blatant (though unplanned or unintended) political maneuverings with and against their press organs at home and the PRC-linked press in Hong Kong were counterproductive. Such realpolitik pressure on the press only served to undermine the professional integrity and public integrity of these press organs.

The close ties of the PRC-linked press in Hong Kong with its counterparts in China also means that the current journalism reform in the mainland may have an impact. However, since the journalism reform was suggested in 1978, significant progress or results have not been made.[67] Like their peers in Hong Kong, the Chinese journalists are seeking a balance between their two masters--the leaders and the readers. There are indications that the readers' interests will be taken more seriously.[68] How far can the Chinese journalist gain their independence from the state/party control will determine to what extent their Hong Kong counterparts will be released from the remote control in Beijing.[69]

Taken together these cases also magnify upfornt the highly unusual but very real sibling rivalry between the PRC-linked press in Hong Kong. Such rivalry took place at the expense of

the supposed function of these communist press as the instrument of party/state's united front in Hong Kong.

As Hong Kong's political transition toward 1997 became increasingly imminent and problematic, a close watch of the press, which is both a player and conveyor of information in the drama, should be a significant and rewarding on-going exercise. From a macroscopic perspective, the "One Country, Two Systems" formula will add a new dimension to the four theories of the press. This exploratory study is just a starting point. From a microscopic perspective, the study of the actors, particularly the journalists' (communist and non-communist) own perception of their role and/or adaption to the changing political situations could be another critical dimension. Such future studies should test and document the practicability of the "One Country, Two Systems" formula in a real-life setting with the future of 5.6 million people in a cosmopolitan, open and free society at stake.

Endnotes:

1. Fred S. Siebert, Theodore Peterson and Wilbur Schramm, The Four Theories of The Press, Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1956. The four theories are: (1) the authoritarian theory, (2) the libertarian theory, (3) the social responsibility theory, and (4) the soviet communist theory.

2. Those studies that have examined this issue included: Tuen-yu Lau and Todd F. Simon, "Is The Coexistence of Capitalist and Socialist Press System Possible? The Case of Hong Kong," presented at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication convention, Portland, July, 1988; Todd F. Simon and Tuen-yu Lau, "When System Collide: Trial of Foreign Communist Media in U.S. Courts," presented at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication convention, San Antonio, August, 1987; Chin-chuan Lee and Joseph Man Chan, "Mass Media and Political Transition in Hong Kong," presented at International Communication Association conference, May, 1986; Chin-chuan Lee, "The Partisan Press in Hong Kong: Between British Colonial Rule and Chinese Politics," presented at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication conference, Memphis, Tenn., August, 1985. Also, Marcia Altmeyer, "Communist Press in a 'Foreign' Environment: A Study of Ta Kung Pao Supplement of Hong Kong," unpublished M.A. thesis, Michigan State University, 1985, was a case study of communist press in Hong Kong, using Ta Kung Pao as the focus.

3. The characteristics of a pluralistic society include a market oriented system that allows private ownership and freedom of speech. The most important characteristic is the availability of contrasting viewpoints without government restrictions. According to these criteria, the communist press system in the four theories of the press is not a pluralistic system because only state-owned media and one unified media voice are allowed to exist.

4. Hong Kong, with a population of 5.6 million, has 68 newspapers and 549 periodicals, including 44 Chinese-language dailies and two English-language dailies. Thirty-four of the Chinese-language dailies are general newspapers covering news, columns and other features. The larger Chinese papers include overseas Chinese communities in their distribution network and have overseas editions in the United States, Canada, Britain and Australia. It is also the regional headquarters of leading international newspapers and magazines, such as The Asian Wall Street Journal, International Herald Tribune, Newsweek, and Time.

5. Hong Kong is basically a free port city with relatively little direct government interference in the functioning of the local economy. Economist Milton Freeman has used Hong Kong as a case study for the freest capitalist model in his book Free To Choose.

6. The PRC government has promised that Hong Kong can maintain its current capitalist lifestyle and practices for another 50 years after 1997. The PRC believe that the economic and ideological differences between the mainland and Hong Kong could be narrowed by then so that a smooth reintegration is possible. The local press under this "One Country, Two Systems" formula will continue to enjoy its freedom.

7. An overall survey of the various aspects of change in Hong Kong at the initial stage of this transition to 1997 can be found in Joseph Y. S. Cheng ed., Hong Kong In Transition, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1986.

8. On the playing of "public opinion card" in the Sino-British negotiations, see Joanne J. L. Chang, "China's Hong Kong Victory: A Study of the PRC's Negotiating Style," presented at the "Hong Kong and Its Future" panel of the Association for Asian Studies annual meeting, San Francisco, March 25, 1988.

9. Igor Sememichin, "The Hong Kong Press: Serving the Dollar and the Yuan," The Democratic Journalist (a journal of the international organization of journalists), March 1987, pp. 23-25. It looked at the Hong Kong press in its balancing act between profit making and Chinese politics.

10. The Sino-British Joint Declaration on Hong Kong's future was the result of 16 rounds of talks held in Beijing between September 1982 and September 1984, when the agreement was initialed. The official signing ceremony took place in December 1984 in Beijing. China will resume sovereignty over Hong Kong on July 1, 1997. The entire agreement was reprinted in Hungdah Chiu, Y. C. Jao and Yuan-li Wu ed., The Future of Hong Kong, New York: Quorum Books, 1987, pp. 181-222.

11. See Norman J. Miners, The Government and Politics of Hong Kong, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1975.

12. Pluralistic used here is in the sense of diversified perspectives. With more than 98 percent of its population being ethnic Chinese whose mother tongue and principal language is Chinese, Hong Kong is in many sense a real "Chinese" community in which the Chinese language press plays a vital role. According to Chin-chuan Lee, the press structure and political ideology in Hong Kong can be classified into four categories: (1) Leftist newspapers, such as Ta Kung Pao and Wen Wei Po, which are the

principal CCP organs; (2) centrist papers, such as Ming Pao and Oriental Daily News; (3) mainstream conservative-rightist papers, such as Sing Tao Jih Pao and Wah Kiu Yat Po; and (4) the Nationalist-linked and -subsidized rightist papers, such as Hong Kong Times. These different newspapers provide a "marketplace of political ideas." See Chin-Chuan Lee, "The Partisan Press In Hong Kong: Between British Colonial Rule and Chinese Politics," pp. 17-18. Joseph Chan had similar classification in "Shifting Journalistic Paradigms: Mass Media and Political Transition in Hong Kong," pp. 32-50.

13. Ta Kung Pao, Wen Wei Po, Hsin Wan Pao, Hong Kong Commercial Daily, and Hong kong Ching Po are pro-PRC newspapers owned by PRC-linked publishers in Hong Kong. The People's Daily Overseas Edition, PRC's official mouthpiece, is also published in Hong Kong. Hong Kong Times is a pro-Taiwan newspaper.

14. The South China Morning Post has often been considered by some observers as pro-government mouthpiece.

15. The most recent case in point is during the course of the 1982-84 Sino-British negotiations on Hong Kong's future. The current debate on the drafting of the Basic Law signals the use of the media to seek a consensus for Hong Kong's future constitution framework.

16. For example, Taiwan's two largest circulated privately-owned newspapers, Taiwan Times and United Journal; and the Taiwan government mouthpiece, Central Daily News, are airmailed to Hong Kong daily. Other PRC dailies, such as The Shenzhen Special Zone Daily, is also available in Hong Kong daily. The People's Daily Overseas Edition, the PRC's official overseas mouthpiece, is printed in Hong Kong daily.

17. Besides Hong Kong, Chinese-language press in other communities outside China and Taiwan is also the battleground for pro-PRC and pro-Taiwan newspapers, see Tuen-yu Lau, "Survival of the Fittest: Competition Among the Chinese-language Newspapers in the United States," presented at the International Communication Association convention, Montreal, Canada, May, 1988; Andy McCue, "Chinese-language Dailies Serving Immigrants in New York City," Journalism Quarterly 52 (Summer 1975): 272-276; and "In the Land of Free Speech: Readers Learn All About it in Foreign-language newspapers Coast to Coast," Time, July 8, 1985.

18. In operational and management terms, Ta Kung Pao and Hsin Wan Pao are the morning and evening twin editions of the same family. Not only do they occupy the same premises in Hong Kong and share the same printing press, they also are run by the same editorial team which was until May 1988 headed by the noted press figure, Fei Yimin.

19. The importance of NCNA Hong Kong Branch is also reflected in the appointment of Xu Jiatun, the former first secretary of the CCP Jiangsu Provincial Committee and CCP Central Committee. This signalled the upgrading of this post to ministerial level. See also, Joseph Chan, "Shifting Journalism Paradigms: Mass Media and Political Transition in Hong Kong," unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1986, chapter 4, "Formation of A Dualistic Power Structure" for an analysis of the NCNA Hong Kong Branch, pp. 51-64.

20. On the issue of a Chinese "consulate' in Hong Kong, see Peter Wesley-Smith, "The Proposed Establishment of A 'China Office' in Hong Kong," Journal of Oriental Studies, v. 19, no. 2, 1981.

21. The NCNA Hong Kong Branch has a director, five deputy-directors, a secretary-general, several deputy secretary-generals and ten functional departments--administration, research, propaganda, foreign affairs, economic, culture and education, arts and sports, coordination, social affairs, and personnel.

22. The Chinese names appearing in this paper all list the family name first. This will lessen confusion incurred for native speakers.

23. A veteran journalist by profession, Fei joined the staff of Ta Kung Po at its Tianjin, China headquarters in the 1930s. The many official titles Fei held were included in the official eulogy of Fei delivered by NCNA Hong Kong Branch Deputy Director Zheng Hua at the memorial service in Hong Kong, reported in Ta Kung Po, May 27, 1988, p.1.

24. In mid-1950, exactly half a year after Britain's formal diplomatic recognition of the new PRC regime, an official in London's Colonial Office informed the Foreign Office about the contemporary status of the leftist press. The internal document mentioned that Ta Kung Pao enjoyed a daily circulation of some 12,000 copies, while Wen Wei Po achieved only half of that, at about 6,000 copies a day. It further recommended that Wen Wei Po was commonly regarded in the local community as the more orthodoxical and authoritative official mouthpiece of the Communist regime, and Ta Kung Pao was vieved as slightly less dogmatic but still sympathetic pro-mainland press organ. See British Foreign Office Records, FO 371-835.25, FC 1671-10 note of July 6, 1950, Seager (Colonial Office) to Trench (Foreign Office), as cited in Steve Tseng, "Aspects of KMT and CCP Activities in Hong Kong, 1945-1952," unpublished seminar paper, Oxford University, 1988. Ever since, Ta Kung Pao and Wen Wei Po have been competing in all fronts to gain the flagship position as the authority of PRC news as well as a credible source on Hong Kong news.

25. Fei Yimin and Lee Tsung Ying v. The Crown, (1952) 36 H.K.L.R. 133. See also, James Shen, The Law and Mass Media In Hong Kong, Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1972, p. 148.

26. The commentary said that people of the motherland should give support to the patriotic countrymen in Hong Kong and the British must bear the full responsibility for any grave consequences, see Joseph Chan and Chiu Sing-mu, "The Future of Press Freedom in Hong Kong From the Structural Analysis," Ming Pao Monthly, May 1987, pp. 10-14.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.

29. During the 1967 riots, 14 journalists of PRC-linked newspapers were arrested on account of unlawful gatherings, three publishers of minor leftist papers were sentenced to three-year prison terms on charge of sedition and publishing false information tending to induce persons to commit an offense. Also, the three papers were suspended until court proceedings against them had been completed. This was meant to signal a warning to such major agitators as Ta Kung Pao and Wen Wei Po, according to Chin-chuan Lee, "The Partisan Press in Hong Kong: Between British Colonial Rule and Chinese Politics," pp. 14-15.

30. Margaret Scott, "Strict Censors Make For Good Neighbors," Far Eastern Economic Review, September 25, 1986, p. 50; Emily Lau, "Censor and Be Damned," Far Eastern Economic Review, April 2, 1987, pp. 32-33/

31. Emily Lau, ibid., pp. 32-33.

32. These data came from SRH Media Index 1987 compiled by the Survey Research Hong Kong Company Limited. Wen Wei Po claimed to have a circulation of 80,000 copies daily.

33. Oriental Daily was the largest circulated daily newspaper with a readership of over one million, according to the SRH Media Index 1987.

34. Ming Pao, a newspaper popular among the intellectuals and the more educated, is the frequent outlet for a PRC-writer using the pen name, "Xinweisi," to express PRC viewpoints in the opinion pages.

35. Chin-chuan Lee, "The Partisan Press in Hong Kong: Between British Colonial Rule and Chinese Politics."

36. See Emily Lau, "Bending With the Wind: With 1997 Looming, the Media Warm to Peking," and the special section on "Hong Kong Press: Leaning to the Left," in Far Eastern Economic Review, February 13, 1986, pp. 24-31.

37. The Hong Kong journalists expressed the concern of self-censorship in an article, "The Inadequacies and Losses of the News Industry," in Ming Pao, February 14, 1988. This issue also was discussed in Far Eastern Economic Review's special section on Hong Kong press, February 13, 1986, pp. 24-31.

38. This period was chosen because the Chinese government, its fronts and press in Hong Kong have been actively engaging in the transition process leading to 1997. The most important is the drafting of the Basic Law that shapes the future governing model. In this discussion, the press in Hong Kong plays a more important role in setting the agenda, generating public attention and reflecting opinions. This will inevitably lead to a more open and obvious confrontation between the PRC-linked press and other press. These phenomena are important to the analysis.

39. In Hong Kong government practice, following the British tradition, a white paper is an official policy position and is usually preceded by a green paper which is issued for solicitation of public comments, a hallmark of the colonial style of "consultation and consensus."

40. The full text of this interview, "The Future Development of Hong Kong's Political System," written by Tan Hua, appeared in the "Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau Special Column," of Outlook Weekly Overseas Edition, No. 45, June 22, 1987.

41. The public figures included two elected members of the Legco from the functional constituencies of the pro-PRC Chinese Chamber of Commerce and the leftist Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions.

42. See both the news section and opinion columns of Ta Kung Pao and Wen Wei Po between June 21 to 25, 1987. Both papers had duly reprinted the full text of Li Hou's Outlook Weekly interview on June 19, 1987.

43. This implied either the provisions for elections were a promise not to be taken literally or that Britain had tacitly indicated it would be content with indirect elections. See "Directing the Elections," Far Eastern Economic Review, July 2, 1987, pp. 30-31.

44. The NCNA rebuttal was carried in most of the local papers, see, for instance, Wah Kiu Yat Po, June 22, 1987, p.2.

45. In the PRC press system, China News Service is specially for propaganda among overseas Chinese, in addition to New China News Agency's official role.

46. The full text of Li's retraction was reported in both Ta Kung Pao and Wen Wei Po, June 24, 1987 as headline stories.

47. This denial reminded of an earlier incident in November, 1985, when Xu openly accused the Hong Kong government's political reforms as deviating from the Joint Declaration. As a result, the local community was electrified with the stock exchange index plummeted more than 50 points the following day. It was later during a visit to Hong Kong by Xu's superior, Jei Pengfei, in December, 1985 that all ill-effects of this bombshell were partially reduced by Jei's repeated assurances. See Paul Sillitoe ed., Asia Yearbook 1987, Hong Kong: Far Eastern Economic Review, 1987, pp. 137-8.

48. The Chinese media have developed the system of seeking instructions and news review and examination as early as June 5, 1948 in a document on "Seeking Instructions" published in the China Journalism Yearbook 1982, Beijing: Chinese Academy of Social Science Publisher, 1982. Basically, all editorials and final dummy proofs should be approved by party leaders before going to print.

49. The article was published in Outlook Weekly Overseas Edition, No. 45, November 7, 1988, pp. 21-23.

50. See Wen Wei Po, November 8, 1988, p. 2. for the full text of this withdrawal statement.

51. See Ta Kung Pao, November 8, 1988, p. 2 for the full text of the same withdrawal statement with its Editor's Note.

52. Beidaihe is a resort city near Beijing where top PRC leaders usually retreat for the summer and occasional high-level meetings are held.

53. A Hong Kong monthly magazine, The Nineties, which is considered one of the authoritative China watchers, has been following this issue since July, 1988.

54. Ta Kung Pao, July 28, 1988, p. 2.

55. Wen Wei Po, August 1, 1988, p. 1.

56. Ta Kung Pao, August 4, 1988, p. 2.

57. Wen Wei Po, August 5, 1988, p. 2.

58. Ta Kung Pao, August 9, 1988, p. 2.

59. Wen Wei Po, August 13, 1988, p. 2.

60. Ta Kung Pao and Wen Wei Po, both August 14, 1988, both p. 1.

61. People's Daily (both domestic and overseas edition), September 17, 1988, p. 1.

62. China is Hong Kong's leading trade partner, accounting for 31 percent of its imports, 14 percent of its domestic exports, and 80 percent of its entrepot trade in 1987, besides being the major supplier of food and water. Hong Kong also is China's largest source of external investment and some two million workers in the Canton Delta are employees of Hong Kong interests. See Government Information Services ed., Hong Kong 1988, Hong Kong: Government Printer, 1988, pp. 52-53 and 343.

63. This comparison of the two teams is provided by Mr. Ivan K. C. Lo, a senior reporter of Sing Tao Jih Pao (a daily newspaper in Hong Kong) and an experienced Beijing correspondent.

64. The new economic course adopted by the Chinese leaders since 1978, two years after Mao's death, emphasizes the modernizations in agriculture, industry, national defense, and science and technology, which have been termed "Four Modernizations."

65. The China Journalism Yearbook 1987 listed 93 foreign media had representatives in Beijing. China Journalism Yearbook 1987, Beijing: Chinese Social Science Publishers, 1987, pp. 531-539.

66. The SRH Media Index of 1983 and 1984 showed that the readership of all PRC-linked newspapers dropped during the two years when the Sino-British talks were going on in Beijing. Although no reason was given for the decline in readership, a magazine report said this was because Hong Kong people were sick and tired of the lack of concrete information on the talks. This is an intriguing issue that needs further investigation. See Chan Wai-yee, "Readership continued to decline," Focus, December 12, 1984, pp. 34-45. The reported, quoting the SRH Media Index, reported the following readership figure for Wen Wei Po as having 92,000 readers in 1983 and 54,000 in 1984; a drop of 41 percent. Similarly, Ta Kung Pao's readership declined from 62,000 in 1983 to 47,000 in 1984; a drop of 24 percent. It should be noted that such statistical analysis would only be meaningful in a comparison over time.

67. See Leonard L. Chu, "Change and Persistence in China's Journalism Reform," presented at the Association for Asian Studies annual meeting, Washington, D.C., March 17-19, 1989; Kenneth Starck and Yu Xu, "Loud Thunder, Small Raindrops: The

Reform Movement and the Press in China," presented at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication conference, Portland, July, 1988; Timothy Cheek, "Redefining Propaganda: Debates on the Role of Journalism in Post-Mao China," presented at the 17th Annual Sino-American Conference on Mainland China, June, 1988, Taipei, Taiwan.

68. In the 41th annual meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, Washington, D. C., March 17-19, 1989, a panel on "Rhetoric and Reality: The Politics and Practice of Journalism Reform in China," addressed these issues. See particularly the papers by Tuen-yu Lau and Xinmin Qin, "Consumers and Reform: Readership Surveys and Audience Inputs;" and Judy Polumbaum, "Serving Two Masters: Leader-orientation and Reader-orientation in Chinese Newswork."

69. This also depends on the willingness of the journalists in resisting the control of the party. For an analysis of the hierarchial structure of PRC press, see Alan P. Liu, "Communist China," in Asian Newspapers Reluctant Revolution, John A. Lent ed., Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1971, pp. 43-54.